

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT BRIEFING - MARCH 14, 1977

THE FOLLOWING Q AND A IS EXCERPTED FROM THE MARCH 14 DEPART-
MENT PRESS BRIEFING:

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY MORE SPECIFIC INFORMATION OR ESTIMATES
ON WHAT'S HAPPENING IN ZAIRE -- WHO'S BEHIND THE FIGHTING
AND THE DIMENSION OF THE FIGHTING?

A: I DON'T HAVE MUCH TO ADD TO FRIDAY. OUR REPORTS FROM
SHABA REMAIN RATHER SKETCHY. WE STILL DO NOT HAVE CON-
FIRMATION OF THE MAKE-UP OR THE SIZE OF THE INVADING
FORCES OTHER THAN THE FACT THAT THEY CLAIM TO BE
KATANGAN GENDARMES. OUR LATEST INFORMATION SUGGESTS THAT
THE INVADING FORCES STILL OCCUPY THE WEST SHABA TOWNS OF
KAPANGA, DILOLO AND KISENGE. WE DON'T HAVE CONFIRMED
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INDICATION THAT THE INVADERS ARE ADVANCING THROUGH THE
REGION. OUR EMBASSY REPORTS THAT THE SITUATION IN
KINSHASA AND OTHER MAJOR POPULATION CENTERS OF THE COUNTRY
REMAINS CALM.

ON EVACUATIONS OF AMERICANS, 15 AMERICANS HAVE BEEN
EVACUATED FROM OR HAVE LEFT ON THEIR OWN ACCORD SANDOA.

THE TOWN OF SANDOA LIES MIDWAY BETWEEN DILOLO AND KAPANGA
AND IT'S CLOSE TO THE ANGOLAN BORDER.

Q: FRED, CAN I STOP YOU THERE --

A: YES, SURE.

Q: -- IF I MAY? I'M JUST TRYING TO CHECK WHETHER YOUR
UPDATING WOULD BE NEW.

A: YES.

Q: WE HAD 13, AND WE HAD TWO MISSIONARIES REMAINING
IN SANDOA. ARE THOSE THE TWO THAT MAKE IT 15 OR IS THERE
SOMETHING ELSE?

A: O.K. NINE MISSIONARIES LEFT SANDOA BY WAY OF KOLWEZI
AND KAFAKUMBA.

Q: BUT THEY'RE OUT OF THE COUNTRY? YOU DON'T KNOW
WHERE THEY ARE?

A: I DON'T KNOW. I SUSPECT THEY'RE STILL IN THE COUNTRY,
BUT THEY HAVE LEFT THEIR NORMAL PLACE.

A TOTAL OF 15 HAVE BEEN EVACUATED OR HAVE LEFT
ON THEIR OWN ACCORD FROM SANDOA. THAT'S THE LATEST FIGURE
I HAVE, A TOTAL OF 15.
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Q: I KNOW ANOTHER WAY TO APPROACH IT, IF YOU DON'T MIND.

A: SURE.

Q: WERE THERE ANY EVACUATIONS TODAY?-- BECAUSE WE'RE UP
TO DATE THROUGH SUNDAY. AS OF SUNDAY THERE WERE 15

A: THE AIRLIFT WAS MARCH 12TH. THAT'S SATURDAY.

A: O.K.

Q: THE ONES WHO ARE UNDER HOUSE ARREST ARE STILL THERE?

A: THE ONES UNDER HOUSE ARREST AGAIN COMMUNICATED BY
RADIO WITH THEIR HEADQUARTERS IN LUMBUMBASHI. THEY
REPORTED AGAIN THAT THEY WERE IN GOOD SHAPE. THEY
COMMUNICATED MARCH 12TH AT 10:50 A.M. LOCAL TIME.
THAT'S SATURDAY. NO REPORT OF COMMUNICATION SINCE THEN.

Q: HAS THE ZAIRE GOVERNMENT ASKED FOR ANY ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE, EITHER MILITARY OR POLITICAL, FROM THIS COUNTRY?

A: THE ZAIRIAN GOVERNMENT HAS ASKED US FOR ASSISTANCE IN THE FORM OF MATERIEL. WE'RE CURRENTLY CONSIDERING THIS REQUEST. I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO GIVE YOU ANY KIND OF DETAILS ON THE REQUEST, HOWEVER.

Q: "MATERIEL" IS AWFULLY BROAD. CAN'T YOU BREAK THAT DOWN A LITTLE BIT?

A: I'M AFRAID I CAN'T. AT LEAST NOT AT THIS TIME.

Q: AREN'T YOU TALKING ABOUT MILITARY OR LETHAL MATERIEL AS YOU HAD A DISTINCTION ONCE?

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A: AT THIS POINT I CAN'T BREAK IT DOWN FOR YOU. IT'S JUST THAT THEY HAVE MADE A REQUEST FOR MATERIEL ASSISTANCE.

Q: WOULD YOU SAY WHO MADE THIS REQUEST?

A: NO. I CAN'T GIVE YOU ANY DETAILS ON THE NATURE OF THE REQUEST.

Q: WHEN DID THE REQUEST COME IN?

A: I DON'T HAVE THE TIME ON IT, BUT IT WAS VERY RECENTLY.

Q: AND IT WAS CLEARLY RELATED TO --

A: YES.

Q: -- THESE EVENTS?

Q: HAS THE EMBASSY BEEN ABLE TO SEND ANY MILITARY ATTACHES OR OTHER OBSERVERS TO THE SCENE OF THE FIGHTING?

A: I DON'T KNOW.

Q: DOES THE ADMINISTRATION CONSIDER THIS A SERIOUS SITUATION?

A: WELL, WE'RE FOLLOWING THE SITUATION VERY CLOSELY. IT'S CERTAINLY NOT AN EVENT TO BE TAKEN LIGHTLY. WE'RE KEEPING AS CLOSE AN EYE AS WE CAN ON DEVELOPMENTS IN SHABA.

Q: ON ANOTHER SUBJECT --

A: YES.

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Q: -- IN THAT PART OF THE WORLD, HAVE THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN UGANDA CAUSED YOU ANY CONCERN?

A: WELL, AGAIN, WE ALWAYS PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO ANY REPORTS OF STATEMENTS OF THE SORT THAT WERE MADE IN THE LAST DAY OR TWO IN UGANDA. AT THE MOMENT WE DON'T BELIEVE THAT THERE'S ANY REASON THAT THE UGANDAN STATEMENT PORTENDS SPECIFIC ACTIONS AGAINST AMERICAN CITIZENS. I NOTE A LATE FBIS ITEM WHERE -- THIS IS DATED 14TH MARCH AT 1500 HOURS GREENWICH MEAN TIME -- IN WHICH PRESIDENT AMIN HAS SAID BRITISH AND AMERICAN NATIONALS WHO WANT TO STAY PEACEFULLY IN UGANDA ARE WELCOME TO DO SO. NOBODY WILL BE AGAINST THEM.

IN ANY EVENT, AT THE MOMENT WE DON'T BELIEVE THERE IS GREAT CAUSE FOR ALARM.

Q: THAT VERY REPORT YOU JUST READ -- YOU KNOW, LOOK A LITTLE FURTHER DOWN AND IT SAYS THE AMERICANS AND BRITISH WHO MISBEHAVE WILL BE ASKED TO LEAVE QUIETLY. IT SAYS AT THE END OF IT HE SAID HE WILL MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO ADDRESS THEM -- I DON'T KNOW IF THAT MEANS ALL THE BRITISH AND AMERICANS --

A: YES.

Q: -- IN THE PRESENCE OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS. ARE YOU STILL GOING TO SAY THIS DOESN'T PORTEND ANY ACTION AGAINST AMERICANS OR --

A: NO. JUST WHAT I SAID: AT THE MOMENT WE HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THIS IS PORTENDING ANY ACTION, ANY SPECIFIC ACTION, AGAINST OUR CITIZENS.

Q: WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THE REQUEST FOR A UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION INVESTIGATION ON THIS?
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A: THAT WAS VOTED DOWN IN GENEVA LAST WEEK.

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Message Attributes

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Subject: DEPARTMENT BRIEFING - MARCH 14, 1977 THE FOLLOWING Q AND A IS EXCERPTED FROM THE MARCH 14 DEPART- MENT PRESS BRIEFING
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